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A Dual Sesquicentennial

The American Democratic Faith rests upon two philosophical propositions which, at least in their implications, are contradictory. Its political foundation is a belief, reflective of an essentially pessimistic view of man, that "no man is good enough to rule another without his consent." The prophet and symbol of this doctrine of man is Abraham Lincoln. The economic foundation of the American Democratic Faith is a belief in the intrinsic value of free competition. This belief, reflective of an essentially optimistic view of man, holds that where men are left free to compete with each other, the weak and inefficient will be forced out of the picture and the strong and efficient will survive, with concomitant advantages to the whole society. This doctrine of economic man traces back, through a series of logical hiatuses, to certain biological theories suggested by Charles Darwin.

If, therefore, we ever get to the point of admitting that the American Democratic Faith is the actual religion of our country, February 12 is, or of right ought to be, its Christmas. For by one of those remarkable coincidences which no fiction writer would dare permit himself, these two apostles of the American Democratic Faith were born on the same day of the same year, February 12, 1809, just 150 years ago this month.

It is manifestly unjust to hold great men responsible for the excesses of their disciples, much less the per-versions of those who misread them. What Lincoln and Darwin actually thought and said is of comparatively little consequence today; what really matters is what people have read into them and deduced from them. It is these inferences and deductions which have furnished the theology of the American Democratic Faith and given it its striking bipolarity. At the one pole cluster all of the ideas that follow logically from the idea of the sovereignty of the common man: universal suffrage, equal rights, government as an active intervening force in society, protection of the weak and handicapped, the Fair Deal, the New Deal, and the Square Deal. At the other pole cluster all of the ideas that follow logically from the idea of a process of natural selection at work to ensure the survival of the fittest: elitism of one form or another, free and un-governed competition, government by experts, selective suffrage, government acting in the limited role of a referee, "that government is best which governs least," and the Right-to-Work law. In a general way, one might classify the two Roosevelts, Wilson, and Truman as Lincolnians; Cleveland, McKinley, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover and Eisenhower as Darwinians. But it is never quite that simple, for the basic schizophrenia which is the most characteristic element of the American Democratic Faith goes all the way down through our political parties into the innermost instincts of our people and their leaders. This, perhaps, is why we so uncritically idolize the practical man: the man who in one situation can operate as a Lincolnian and in another situation operate as a Darwinian without being at all disturbed by the fact that he has shifted his philosophical ground.

In a sense, we are able to make the American brand of democracy work because we are basically a non-rational people. The logical French, who keep insisting upon a continuum between philosophy and policy, are forever being bogged down in a morass of parliamentary inaction because they can not see any virtue in compromise. Our philosophical differences, profound as they may appear to the logician, are fortunately subsumed under the first and greatest commandment of the American Democratic Faith: "Thou shalt get things done." So we do. But we never feel quite right about how we get them done, and perhaps that is why politics is regarded with such suspicion among us and the discipline of the mind is considered almost a form of subversion.
The Insistence Upon Excellence

Sufficient time has now passed to permit a sober look at l'affaire Terry Brennan and, as so often happens, a frame of reference borrowed from theology gives the case a setting which permits it to be seen in perspective.

Universities exist, someone has said (with, perhaps, his tongue in his cheek), to maintain a continuing quest for excellence. It follows, therefore, that one of the great frustrations of the University is the fact that, for all practical purposes, it is next to impossible for the University to measure the degree to which it has accomplished its stated purpose. For who is to say whether Professor A, he of the unconventional ideas, is a nut or a genius? Who can say whether the last crew of freshmen shipped out of Government 51 was a new and powerful leaven in society or just a batch that went wrong? The great thing about being a professor is that nobody really knows how good or bad you were until you are practically ready for retirement.

But the poor old coach operates in a system very different from that of his colleague in the lecture room or the laboratory. There is a way — perhaps not a very good one, but at least a simple one — of measuring his performance. Week by week, under the critical eyes of faculty, administration, students, alumni, and the press, he has to put his charges through their paces. And the scoreboard tells the story. As long as he comes out on the heavy end of the score he is a teacher of character, a moulder of men, a fine influence on our students. Let him lose a few and he is a bum.

Now, crude as this method of judgment may be, maybe there is something to be said for it. After all, we can’t read each other’s hearts and minds, and good intentions never paved the way to heaven. So we must, perforce, judge each other by what we can see; which is to say, by performance. And if it be the purpose of competitive games to win, one is sorely limited in what he can say in defense of a coach who loses.

What bothers the fair-minded man (and this is where a frame of reference borrowed from theology comes in handy) is that the coach becomes the victim of the heresy of exclusive emphasis. It is not wrong to fire coaches because they lose too many games and thus defeat the purpose of the University to maintain exacting standards of excellence in all areas. What is wrong is that the coach is singled out for judgment, not because he is peculiarly deserving of it but because he is peculiarly vulnerable to it.

No one would get unduly worked up about Terry Brennan’s dismissal if it were the policy of Notre Dame to dismiss, let us say, professors of political science whose former students voted in unduly large numbers for Bill Jenner, or professors of English whose former students have read nothing more profound than Peyton Place since their graduation. But, of course, you can’t get the goods on these guys, so they are safe so long as they avoid the three deadly sins of murder, rape, and “a negative attitude.”

We are not sure that athletics are over-emphasized at Notre Dame or on any other campus in the country. The trouble, as we see it, is that we have not yet found a way to insist upon as demanding a level of performance in the classroom and laboratory as we insist upon in the gymnasium and on the playing field. And that is why the professional life of a coach is, on the average, so much shorter than that of a professor.

A Hopeful Development

In the old days when kings still reigned in Europe alliances between states used to be sealed by Country A shipping off a princess to marry the crown prince of Country B. There was something at once romantic and simple about that kind of arrangement and the marriages that resulted from it were, on balance, probably about as happy as most marriages. Nowadays, of course, things have to be done differently because the kings have mostly been packed off to Portugal and the former crown princes are all manufacturers’ representatives for American firms. Instead of inter-dynastic marriages we have fiscal mergers arranged by prime ministers who marry off their national currencies to the currencies of other, friendly nations. There is something rather unromantic about it all, and only the economists understand what really happens, but it seems to work very well, which is as much as one can hope for in an unromantic age.

Shortly before the beginning of the year, France and Great Britain began removing the last of their wartime currency restrictions with a series of monetary reforms which greatly smoothed the way for the effective working of the European Common Market which came into being on January 1. France made some truly magnanimous moves in the direction of European economic stability by devaluing her franc a whopping 17.55 percent and by abolishing ninety percent of her import quotas against the countries of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation. Great Britain made the pound “externally convertible,” that is, exchangeable by persons other than her own subjects into the currency of any other country at full value.

It is pretty hard to jazz a story of this sort up, but anyone who has even the vaguest idea of its implications must be pretty excited about it. Beneath all of the formidable economics there is the story of a new Europe, a Europe which has recovered its sense of oneness and has chosen to turn its attention to future opportunities rather than the animosities of the past. All of Europe west of the Communist bloc — with the exceptions of Portugal, Spain, and Ireland — is in the process of becoming an economic union, a first step, perhaps, toward political union.
I am one of those bungling, inept, laughable, but sometimes lovable creatures around the house known as a father. I hasten to add this is not my estimate of myself, but it is what television, radio, women's magazines, and the woman's page of newspapers tell me I am. According to the messages from these mass media, I am a person with a child's mentality and emotional stability, my mechanical aptitude is zero, and my only hope for survival lies in doing what my wife advises.

If this sounds strange to you, you haven't been listening in on any of the family dramas available on both radio and television. It makes little difference which one of these shows you choose to watch, since all follow more or less the same pattern. That pattern goes something like this. The family has a problem. Last week father was going to add to the family income by doing some door-to-door selling but was picked up for not having a peddler's license. This week the problem is simpler: the kitchen faucet has a leak. The problem of the leaky faucet is stated early in the show. Father declares he is going to repair the faucet. At this point, mother and the children exchange a smug and knowing look which says we've been through this before but let's humor the old boy. Father gets into trouble immediately; not only is the faucet not fixed but somehow other joints have been loosened and the house is flooding. More knowing looks are exchanged between mother and children and then mother takes over. With a twist of her left wrist she shuts off the water and with the wrench in her right hand she repairs the faucet. Mother is triumphant and father exits mumbling.

That most fathers are not capable plumbers, that they make mistakes, and that they may not have the answers to all of the world's problems, I am willing to grant. But that they are outright boobs in almost every situation I cannot accept. There must be a great deal of humor in treating father as some sort of undisciplined household pet, because these programs have been shown successfully for years. But it strikes me as an unhealthy situation when a show has to use the device of constantly belittling father and raising mother to near deification to be successful.

This type of momism also fills the pages of women's magazines and the woman's pages of newspapers, where countless articles tell the wife how to handle the husband. Some of these contain a note of sweet reasonableness. For example, an article on how to treat the husband when he comes home from a hard day at the office accepts the fact that he has had a hard day, though there are intimations that he spent more than his share of time at the water cooler. But the article points out that you, mother, have had an even harder day at home what with taking care of the children and keeping house. Since you've both had a hard day, the article goes on to say, you should both share in the remaining work. In other words, when you walk in the door, dad, grab a broom.

When father finishes his household chores, another article tells him he should get busy being a pal to his kids. He is supposed to climb trees, play ball, and, I suppose, make mud pies with the younger ones. Whatever the boys want to do, father should do; he should be one of the boys; he should get that old spirit of togetherness. Nonsense. It's fine for a father to play with his children, but when the kids want a pal, they want it to be someone their own age. They want a father they can respect, not one who is always pounding his fist in a baseball glove and yelling all out for rounders.

I have often wondered who writes this twaddle for television and the newspapers. The bylined articles are by persons I never heard of. Why anyone would take the advice of a stranger on matters as important as those of the family, I could never understand. A few days ago, I read that one of the writers for a television show in which father is always the fall guy is on his third marriage. That figures. If the real purpose of the magazines and newspapers is to be helpful, I would suggest they cut out the advice columns and, about once a week, print the Christian wedding vow. I can't think of any domestic problem which couldn't be solved by Christian love and understanding. The disadvantage of the vow for these publications is that it contains no humor and occupies very little space on a page.
Keeping The Feast*

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Introduction

Christ Jesus, our Paschal Lamb, has been sacrificed for us. During these days and weeks of Lent we contemplate that act of sacrifice in order that we may immerse ourselves in the depths of His love, that we may gain courage and strength through a considered meditation on His physical sufferings, and, by all means, that we learn to know and share its meaning for us. It was “for us men and for our salvation” that Jesus Christ came to earth and suffered and died and on the third day rose again.

As I prayed to the Holy Spirit to guide me in words and thoughts for you, it seemed good to Him to lead me to preach to you on the theme Keeping the Feast, namely the Christian Passover of Deliverance and Resurrection, of Death and Life. There is deliverance from death into life and our Passover Lamb is the Deliverer. The death that is already at work when men come into the world grows in its hold of corruption as the generations of men become more practiced in deception and evil. This Death Jesus hammered to death on the Cross. There is also Resurrection — the Eternal and Real Life — breaking in upon us out of heaven as a new creation.

Keeping the Feast of the Resurrection, therefore, means that we learn the length and breadth of the new life in Christ, and learn to live it. The Resurrection of Jesus means that He is now alive, and He is alive to carry out the quality and meaning of His death and resurrection for us. Living so as to Keep the Feast is chiefly the life of Jesus Christ manifesting itself in our mortal bodies.

Almighty God, our Creator and Redeemer, chose in His infinite wisdom and love to reveal Himself to us through the Sacrifice of His Son. Herein is God’s love delivered and sealed to us sinners. Jesus Christ, in His Body, as a living tabernacle and way into the presence of God, made access for God to us and for us to God. Jesus Christ is not only the Lamb slain; He is also the Priest that offered up the sacrifice. And now, as the Living Priest, great and eternal in the heavens, He still carries out His work for us before God. The Scriptures describe this work as that of intercessor and advocate. The victorious Jesus — having been perfected through suffering — lives in and with His people to lead them victoriously through their suffering for His Name’s sake.

As the great Priest once and for all time offered up His Body on the Cross to make reconciliation for the sins of the world, so now Jesus Christ, the Great Priest, uses His Body to carry the message of reconciliation to the whole world. That Body which He now uses is His Church — people who are attached to Him through faith by the Holy Spirit and who are attached to each other through love, that bond of perfectness. This is His community, the Priestly Community of God. They are in the world, but not of the world; they are colonists of the heavenly kingdom, living for a time as strangers and pilgrims in the lands and communities where they live and work, marry and grow old and die.

Blood Brothers in the Community of God

How does this community of God — this priestly community — keep the feast?

They keep the Feast by daily and constant meditation on the source of their life:

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. (John 19:32–37)

The community of God has its supernatural life flowing out of the wounded side of the Savior.

As people around us think about their lives, they are gripped by their aloneness; they are staggered by the size and strength of the barriers that separate people from each other and from themselves. Driven frantic by the dangers of separation, and made foolish by their ignorance of the real barriers, men struggle violently to make community for themselves. They band in secret groups with almost ridiculous pomp and ceremony; they adopt and promote fanatical schemes that give people a cause to which they can dedicate themselves; or, in

* These addresses were delivered in the Chapel of Valparaiso University as the John Martin and Clara Amanda Gross Memorial Lectures during the first week in Lent, March 10-14, 1958.
their weakness and sickness, they gather around John Barleycorn and with gluttony of food and drink they try to make the only kind of cohesion they know and at the same time don’t fear.

The mania for mass production and mass education, for conformity in thought and politics are some of the symptoms of the loneliness. In their blindness, people interpret likeness as unity, and conformity as community. But the deep-seated antagonism of each man’s self against the Godhead of God and against the selfhood of every other man, will not be controlled or put aside by shallow and temporary conformity. The inherent drives of the sinful self, with its wisdom for seeking its own ends, its devices for securing itself, its schemes for establishing meaning and status to its own life, are all frustrated by the simple fact that God is God.

But now we behold the eternal and loving God shedding blood on the Cross, and from His side there flows blood and water. Here is the water of Baptism, that water and power by which the self is killed. Into this fountain of life-giving waters the old self, the dead self, with its ingrained hostilities toward God and man, is put to death with Jesus Christ. However, the water of Baptism is also life-giving, that is, it gives to us the life of the Son of God. Out of the side of Jesus Christ, the Savor of men, there flows our life as a community of God’s priests — a community that belongs to God, purchased and won with eternal offering, to make us anew as people pleasing to God. If the blood of human relationship runs thicker than water, the brotherhood in the community of God is a place where water runs thicker than blood.

Blood also poured from the side of the Savior. This is His Blood, the blood that cleanses us from sin. Sin means death and corruption. Death and corruption mean hostility and fear. Hostility and fear mean separation. Where there is no life pulsating through a member of our body, gangrene will soon destroy the member — and the body. But here is the blood that cleanses men, both from the wrath which arises because of our separation from and hostility against God, and from the impurity which arises where death reigns.

To Keep the Feast we meditate on our origin. As the new community of God, the priestly community through which Christ still functions as the High Priest of the whole world, we remember that our life flows from the open wound of the suffering Son of God.

Three points, like sharp arrows, drive themselves into our souls as the words of God come to us through Christ. First, there is the strong claim God makes upon us: we do not belong to ourselves. When the first lamb was sacrificed and His blood became the avenue of escape from wrath and death in Egypt, God took His people with a mighty arm out of the bondage of Egypt. He created a new and peculiar people for Himself that through them He might disclose His purposes of salvation to the whole world. It was to this ancient people, newly made and sealed in the covenant with God, that God committed the Word of His Covenant. They — by His choice and will — preserved it for the world and spoke it to the world. They belonged to Him because in His love He wanted a vehicle for keeping His witness to Himself before the eyes of all mankind. Thus, as the priestly community of God, you belong to none but God, for Him to make witness of Himself and glorify Himself before the eyes of the whole world through you.

The second sharp arrow that drives itself into our souls through His Word is that where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. The life of the new community is not only a reformed life, a life in which a new leaf is turned over. It is not a former life now reclothed with religion. It is a new life, His own resurrection life, that is giving itself out in these mortal bodies and earthly tabernacles. Through His promises God has unleashed His exceeding great power to make us partakers of His divine nature (II Peter 1). You do not come to the consciousness of this new life by taking your religious pulse or measuring the temperature of your religious impulses. You — as God’s priestly community — become aware of your new life as you look by faith at the wounded Savior and see your very existence flowing from His side. Faith sees more than the eyes can see. Faith sees here in His side the new and eternal life for us.

The third sharp point driven into our souls through the Word of God is this: if we belong to God with such a radical decisiveness, seeing that He has purchased us at such great cost to Himself; and if we belong to Him in such intimate union that He lives out His own loving life in us, then most certainly we belong to each other. The indifference to the goals of God or the needs of the brother, the disdain for men in their weaknesses, the pandering after men in their strength, all these are knocked in the head. We belong to each other because God has claimed us for Himself and given us to each other. We belong to each other because the water of Baptism and the Blood of Christ have incorporated us as members of His Son.

We are blood brothers of the community of God. He brings us together in Himself that He may continue to function among men with the message of reconciliation. Each one, in his responsibility before God, and in union with the others as new born, new made, offers himself to God and to the world that the fact and meaning of the reconciliation through Jesus Christ might be revealed to the whole world.

II

The Presence of the King of Peace

Yesterday we heard that in keeping the feast the priestly community of God meditates on its origin in the wounded side of the Savior. That is, we remember
that our life with God and our life together begins and is continued through the Water of Baptism and the Blood of the New Covenant in the Eucharist.

Today we concentrate our attention on the fact that the King of Kings is truly present with and lives in His priestly community.

Do you remember the description of man’s conduct after he had fallen into sin and God had come with His Word to speak to Adam? Adam hid from God. God called, “Adam, where are you?” and Adam said, “I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” This is the description of guilty man called to account before God: he is tormented by fear arising out of shame.

Now listen to another description of fear:

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be with you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the Twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the Lord. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.

(John 20:19-29)

Here you see the new community of Jesus’ disciples standing in fear, fear so strong that they could not face the anger of the Jews.

Fear does things like this to people — we all know that, don’t we? Fear makes men foolish; it causes men to launch out on the silliest programs for securing themselves. Adam and Eve thought fig leaves could hide their shame and a bush could hide them from the eye of God. Fearful men trust to the schemes of their own fearful minds and to the devices of their own fear-driven hands. What kinds of fear haunt you? Whatever kind they may be — and you alone know the thousand dark spooks and specters that whisk around in your mind — they are not only miserable and uncomfortable, they destroy wise, constructive, decisive action. Fear either paralyzes men into inaction, or it drives them frantically to foolish and unthoughtful action.

But God has given us neither the spirit of servile fear, nor has He commissioned us to disheartened action. Countless times in the Scriptures, God says to His people, “Fear not . . .” And Jesus tells us that servile fear is to be destroyed and its grip broken by that great, over-riding fear of God which sets us free from the earth-born fears.

The priestly community of God is marked with courage and power to act. “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15). From where does it get its courage? How shall it replenish its power? It shall do this by keeping itself constantly mindful of the presence of the King of Peace.

Jesus stands among the disciples with His wounded hands. Your names are written on these hands. No man can blot them out of God’s memory or book. All the fear that comes from the loss of one’s name, status and safety, are overcome in the writing of God’s Spirit, by which you are Named in the hand of God. This is precisely how Jesus as the Good Pastor works with you, for as He teaches you to look away from the enemies that terrify you, He teaches you also to look at His wounds for you. While He thus calls you to look, He also speaks. Words of peace issue from His lips, words so powerful, so validated by His own death and resurrection, that they carry with them what they themselves signify: peace.

The priestly community of God keeps the Feast by using the presence of Christ the King. We focus our attention on His wounds; we listen to His words; we speak His words. And what happens when the priestly community faithfully sees His wounds, hears Him preach, and speaks His words? Two things are noted in the text: (1) He breathes on them the Holy Spirit. This is their life and power. The great and high King of heaven lives in the full measure of His own life with the disciples. His very breath — that is, His Life, becomes their courage and power. He gives Himself to them. As God once before breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul, so again in the new community of God, God breathes His Spirit into His disciples, and they come to life with the splendor of His own glorious majesty. When God’s priests, ordinary Christians such as you and I, focus our
attention on His eternal and unchangeable power, how
can we stand long in fear of man? When we hear the
words of peace from His lips, and see the wounds by
which this peace was won, how can we long stand in
fear of the threats and ridicule of men?

Men are also basically afraid of being worthless.
Nothing is more dreadful than boredom and frustra-
tion which arise from a sense of worthlessness and the
haphazard drifting through life. (2) As clear as the
target to the marksman, Jesus, by His presence among
us, directs us to the eternally serviceable life. The
King of heaven and earth talks to you, His new-formed
kingdom of priests to whom He has given all things
when He has given Himself, and He says: your assign-
ment in life is a direct extension of My own. As the
Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. With a
sweep far beyond time, with authority far greater than
the mightiest man, He looks into you and gives you
this commission: go out into the world, the world of
guilty men made fearful. Tell them what their fear is
and whence their guilt. To those who heed your
words and turn from death to life, to them you open
heaven. You speak words — words of forgiveness —
words so powerful that all hell is shattered by them;
they are My words in your mouth and they are valid
because of My death and resurrection. To those who
prefer fear to faith and who love evil rather than
eternity, speak a word (He says), a word that will not
forgive them till they repent and live, a word they will
not be able to forget, because it is loaded with My
validity.

But Thomas was not with them. Often we are like
this: when we need the Lord the most, we are not at
that place where we can meet Him because He meet us.
Doubt corrodes faith and corrupts the will. For such
times and situations among the priestly community our
Lord has also acted in His grace.

You will recall that He appeared in His Body and
showed Thomas His hands and side. He still has a
mode of appearing to His gathered disciples with His
Body and Blood, to bring peace, to arouse faith, to
seal and confirm the words of His mouth. This mode
or means is the Most Holy Sacrament of His Body and
Blood. Through these He directs our attention to
Himself, His birth and death, His resurrection and
session and His coming again. With practical and
shrewd wisdom, He Himself in this Meal elicits faith
to conquer doubt. Following the Scriptures and the
orthodox teaching of the Church down through the
ages, the Lutheran church holds that Jesus Christ the
Priest and King is truly present in the Sacrament. The
whole Christ is present, not merely in memory, but in
truth and reality. He Himself seals and confirms what
is written and spoken in the Word that we may fear
and love and trust Him, and fall down in adoration be-
fore Him, confessing Him as Lord and God. In this
way He comes to you to deliver you from fear and
doubt, to carry you over into the freedom of faith and
love.

Imagine yourself to be the loyal subject of a King.
Through an attack on the kingdom by an enemy you
had been taken prisoner and thrown into the innermost
dungeon of the enemy. But as you were being carried
off into captivity the King’s men shouted to you:
“The King will return; have hope.” As you lay in
captivity, you nursed your hope on this promise. Your
rehearsing it daily and hourly not only kept you sane,
but also made you aware of the King’s ultimate pur-
pose for you. Then one clear day you hear the tumult
of battle. Suddenly from far off on the top of the
battlement you hear the crystal clear and lordly voice
of your King. He proclaims victory and freedom to
all His subjects. With this word piercing your ears,
your heart leaps for joy at your freedom — although
you are physically in the dungeon. Now the King
Himself finds His way to you, throws open the prison
door and with His own Person, scarred from the con-
lict which created your freedom, makes His Words
ture to you beyond the shadow of doubt.

Thus, too, the Great King is present in and with His
priestly community to deliver them from every slavery
and foolish fear, from doubt and the corrupt will. The
Body that bears the marks of the war which secured
your freedom is the Body He gives in person: speaking
words of peace with His mouth and sealing life with
Him through the Sacrament. With this Presence of
His before you constantly (and you should turn your
mind to it day and night) Christ the King showers you
with peace, endows you with the power of the Holy
Spirit, and puts meaning into your life which gives
you not only something to die for, but some One to live
for.

III

Eucharistic Men

Yesterday we heard that Jesus Christ, the King of
Peace, is present with His priestly community in order
to speak the word of Peace to them. To seal them in
His peace, He Himself comes to them in His Body and
Blood, that by His own Self living in them He might
lead them to boldness of faith and to fulfillment of
destiny. Furthermore, Jesus breathes His Spirit on
the disciples and sends them out into the world with
the Word of divine peace, that is, with the Word of
forgiveness of sin to penitent sinners.

Today we crave God’s Spirit and Word upon us that
we might be and become Eucharistic Men*.

* The title for this sermon was suggested to me by a foot-
note in Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy. I not
only want to acknowledge this debt, but take this opportuni-
ty to express my appreciation to all the others to whom I owe
similar debts, people who have planted seeds in my mind and
heart, but whose names I have forgotten, or, because of the
work load and study habits of a parish priest, cannot trace.
Let the glory be God’s; then they and I can rejoice together.
They will readily recognize what they have contributed.

February, 1959
What are Eucharistic men? They are thankful people, people who not only give thanks, but live thanks! Thanksgiving is (for them) not only and not chiefly the verbalization about gratitude or a series of words at set intervals on certain occasions. Thanksgiving is the key-note of their lives, the shape and expression of the whole existence in the created world of daily life. Most certainly their thanks-living expresses itself in words, because it is expressing itself in their attitudes and actions; it certainly comes out into the open because it is a bubbling fountain of joy welling up in them, constantly being fed by the Great Act of Jesus Christ — the Root of all thanksgiving.

Ah, there it is: God's Act in Jesus Christ is the Root of our thanks-living. God has come, in what C. S. Lewis calls the "great dive," to be our Brother and thus to take our lot upon Himself. That is, He bore our life, weaknesses and infirmities to the bitter end on the Cross. But in His Act God reconciles us to Himself, and through His Word of Reconciliation calls us to a life of peace — a life in which He is our Father! Our life, then, is a life as Children of heaven, coming into being and continuing in existence by the Act of God in Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving could easily become "an exercise in manners," a hazy, sentimental religiosity, far separated from "bread and butter" reality, had not our Lord kept His Lordship for Himself. He Whose Act is the Root of our thanksgiving is alive today to share His act with us in order to make us Eucharistic men, but Eucharistic (that is, thankful) because of Him and His Act. Thus, He tells us to remember Him, lest forgetting Him we sink again into bitterness or into self-created gratitude developed by religious propaganda. To remember Him: this is of vital importance. Yet this is not merely an exercise of memory (particularly after memory has been fed certain religious facts); it is awareness of participation in His Act because He, the now-living One, shares Himself with us and He does it by uniting His Word with the simple "stuff" of creation: bread and wine.

Jesus, in the night He was betrayed, took bread and when He had given thanks, He blessed it and gave it to His disciples and said, "Take; eat; this is My Body." In similar fashion He took the cup, after supper, and giving thanks, He blessed it and gave it to them. He told them all to drink this cup of the New Covenant in His Blood. Thus, He Who was about to be offered, offered Himself to His disciples; He Who has been offered now offers Himself, taking us with Him into the fulfilment of His work for us. What He gives us is Himself, that is, His Act in His birth and life, death and resurrection, reigning and coming again.

To share this with us He uses the simplest vehicles: bread and wine. These are common things in the created world. Coupled with His Word and blessing they are the Common Food for God's Family. Sinful men become idolatrous over bread and wine. They anchor their hearts to bread and to its security; they crave it for reasons of fear or greed, lust or hate. Men fight over bread, its production and distribution and control. Men make it the grand end of all their being (either as pleasure or power) and men are heart-broken, full of anxiety, when the bread of their life is threatened. It was around food (given for use under the Word of God) that Satan organized his first attack on man in order to get man to use food under the word of Satan and thus frustrate God's purposes for man. The Second Adam in the wilderness was confronted by the deceiver with the same simple yet fate-full choice. And so are you!

You don't have to be trained in the art of anxiety — how to worry successfully. Just doing what comes naturally will soon feed you on an ample diet of anxiety. But even beyond the worry and anxiety, you don't need training in how to become an effective grumbler. You can (by nature) murmur quite skillfully about everything from your wife to your preacher, from your professor to your roommate.

Or have you found it necessary to take a course on greed? Who has had to teach you the art of discontent? Even with our high-sounding words about "progress," "improvement," and "advancement," we cannot cover, hide, or change this basic malady of greed. Even if we do deceive ourselves about its nature by hiding it from truth, we cannot hide from the outcome of greed and grumbling and discontent, for God is still God and in His love will not allow corruption in the object of His love. If a man feeds himself on his greed and discontent, this is finally what he becomes — greed. We become what we "eat" — and I am not speaking only of groceries.

Aye! We become what we eat. Jesus says to us. Take eat; take drink. In the mystery of His own Person, in the power of His own Act of Love, He shapes us by feeding us on Himself. He not only feeds us on His Body; He builds us into His Body!

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the One Body. And be thankful.

(Col. 3:15)

The eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood are life ined: but the Eucharistic Life, no less! As there are not benefits without faith, so the Lord has chosen no other simple vehicles, save bread and wine under His Word, by which to convey these benefits to us. He — in His Act — is the Root of Thanks-living. In this central act of the priestly community remembering Him, the Great Priest shares Himself in His Act with us.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let
us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

(Heb. 12:28)

Be thankful! This is not a pious wish! It is a life-giving call from the Giver of life. He calls you into peace with God. The harmony of God’s creation begins its rule over your life because in Jesus Christ God acted to make peace. Where this is the diet of life, that upon which your life nourishes itself, there is thanks-living.

But you still must live in the “bread and butter” world of creation. There are still bills to pay, assignments to get, exams to pass, requirements to meet. You are a working part of a created community. Groceries are an essential part of that community. Be thankful! Here, too? Precisely! The Reconciler is also Creator. He Whose Act restores you to God also acts to replenish you — along with the whole creation of which you are a functioning part — by His blessing and powerful word. Because He makes you sharers in His Act by giving you the bread and wine of the Eucharist, which by His Word brings you forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, He sets you free to work for and eat groceries day by day with care-free thankfulness. He consecrates all things because He consecrates you.

IV

Food for the Journey

Yesterday we heard the priestly community of God described as Eucharistic, that is, thankful men. The note of thanksgiving arises in God’s people from His Act in Jesus Christ consecrating them and their lives for His work in the world. Lest we get the false notion that the community of God’s priests is some sort of “Sunshine Club,” I want to preach to you today about the Church under the Cross as I speak on Food for the Journey.

Make no mistake about this: God’s priestly community lives in hostile territory. Do not fail to understand this; do not become foolish so as to underestimate the extent of the danger, the grim determination of the enemies, and the weakness of ourselves in the struggle. Our great Priest is now in glory, but the way to glory is the Way of the Cross. We who are heirs of His work suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. At this time we are on the way; we are not yet in glory; we travel toward the realm of glory. Ours is still the wilderness run.

In Revelation, that book which makes such a dramatic sweep across history, dipping down into history to show what is happening, who is moulding it, and what its final outcome will be, we have a splendid portrayal of the community life of God’s priests in their life in the wilderness. In chapter 12 God describes not only the Virgin Mother bearing the Child Who is hated by Satan, but also, by implication, the whole Church is described — as she carries Christ in the world.

So furious is the rage and hostility of Satan that the woman flees into the wilderness. This seems to be weakness — even defeat. However, the marvel of it is that God Himself has prepared this place for her and in secret nourishes her.

She brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

(Rev. 12:5,6.)

Don’t fall into the fallacy of thinking that this is merely a vision, applicable indeed in the days of persecutions but unreal in these days of religious revival. Satan, the arch-enemy, wants nothing so ardently as to have the priests of God fall into this sort of dream world. The conflict is real; it is a life and death struggle. We need food for the journey.

Another incident in Holy Scriptures points up the seriousness of the conflict and illustrates that real life lies in the food which God supplies to His priestly community as they journey in the wilderness. Elijah was a man like ourselves. He had real human needs; his weaknesses were embarrassingly like ours. More than this: he lived in a world gone wild with religion. While he was only one prophet for God’s priestly community, the popular and successful religion of the day had more than 400 priests gathered in one place. Not only was his day a field day for religion, it was above all a time of belly-service and sensual idolatry. People were practical, immoral and successful — all with the approval, yes, even demands of their god, Baal. Such an environment is charged with conflict for the priestly community of God. Satan’s followers, and Christ’s, have nothing in common, except conflict.

Elijah knew how to get into trouble for the right reasons. By standing firm in the grace and truth of God, Elijah had not only manifested the glory of God on Mount Carmel, but he had preached God’s judgment against the idolaters. Therefore Jezebel hated him and swore to kill him. What can one man do against a religious government, hostile to the death? Elijah fled. Although God had manifested a glorious victory, Elijah (in the wilderness now, 1 Kings 19) was weak unto death; he wanted to die. Elijah lay down to sleep under a tree, and behold an angel came and touched him and told him to arise and eat. At his side were a cake and a jar of water. Real angel food for his wilderness run! He ate and slept again. A second time the angel touched him, saying, “Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you.” Elijah obeyed the word of the angel, rose up and ate the food, “and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb to the mount of God.”

We can see that although Satan is the arch-enemy,
he is not alone in his attack. To give him strong support is our weak flesh. We get weary of the conflict; we want peace by the cessation of hostilities. Weariness leads us to dull forgetfulness on the one side, or to wild and sordid jags on the other. Dark thoughts and confusion of counsels harass on every hand. Like ancient Israel, we can witness deliverance and eat the paschal lamb on one night, and three days later stand whining at the Red Sea, as if God had died — or gone on a vacation.

It is in precisely such pressure situations that false solutions present themselves so ingratiatingly and convincingly. The prodigal son would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat. Under pressure the priestly community is confronted with this enemy, too. Programs which imitate the real life, thrills which pervert the real joy, nourishment which looks like true food, all present themselves in acceptable form. Upon these imitation solutions the priestly community is urged to eat, to build itself up in conformity with the times, to take its boldness from its numbers and success, to parade its piety as a guarantee of its truth and to beg for the approval of its enemies.

This is not keeping the feast!

The priestly community of God does live in the wilderness. She is not only driven there by the enemies; she is led there by God! Under the tree God hides her and feeds her in secret — on food the world does not know. The tree under which the community of God's priests hides, and where she is fed, is the tree of the Cross — that altar on which God's High Priest made the sacrifice of Himself once and for all times. On it He offered His flesh as the food for the world so that he who eats might never hunger. He who eats has unlimited nourishment to take him his “forty days” to the Mount of God. On this tree-altar God's Son spilt His blood. He who drinks of it shall never thirst for he is supplied by a living fountain, gushing up within him.

God speaks to His priestly community and in His speaking He creates and feeds His community. The priestly people of God have this Word from Him as the beginning and end of their existence. This Word is their existence! To hear it, to believe it, to speak it summarizes their whole life of worship in the wilderness. This Word is their victory over Satan: this Word is their wisdom in weakness; it is their light in darkness, their counsel in confusion. This Word leads them into the wilderness and there it nourishes them.

Through this Word God engages His priestly community in the act of remembering Him. Since the coming in the flesh of His only-begotten Word, Jesus Christ, God addresses His people and involves them in His “clothed Word.” However, when God commands His priests to “Do this” in the Sacrament, He is not merely demanding that they run through a religious routine (with sincerity and periodic repetition). He is engaging His community in the act of remembrance. He is uniting them with Himself on the tree, that is, in the wilderness. Thus, in this act He makes His priestly people sharers in His Body and Blood — in Himself, and in the secret (mystery) of His own love, He nourishes them in the life of faith until they come with Him into the glory. Without union with Jesus in His death and resurrection, there is no glory — as there is no “wilderness run.” And there can be no union with Jesus except that union caused by God engaging us in Word and Act as He feeds us with His favor because of Christ's death and resurrection.

Thus, the Eucharistic meal is food for us on the journey. By His act God binds us to Himself in the forgiving work of Jesus Christ. By this same act God binds us into the community of love as God's priests. We all feed on Jesus Christ, God's food for us. In the feeding as priest we engage in feeding one another by the very Word of God's presence among us. Our weakness in the wilderness makes this precisely the place where God feeds us with His own presence, and our keeping the Feast is nothing less than giving this strength to each other.

V

Living at the End of the Ages

During these days together we have been describing to each other and thinking about the priestly community of God “Keeping the Feast” of our Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ. In this, our last meeting together, I want to preach to you about the priestly community Living at the End of the Ages. This doesn't mean I am going to dive into God's mathematics department and try to figure out His calculations. He who does mathematics with God will go mad! But I am going to preach to you about Christian hope — and the difference that the hope in Jesus Christ makes for you — now.

St. Paul says in I Corinthians 11:26, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.” So then, the priests of God's community do not have their hearts attached to this world. Although they live and work in this world their hearts are detached from it. The tap root of their existence runs a straight line into the death of Jesus Christ.

Let us ponder this. Your tap roots — as God's priestly community — do not suck their energy from guilt and failure, from fear and corruption by death. It is true that your life naturally drew its energy from this place of death. It is still true that your flesh sends out its feeder roots, trying to sink them into the old soil for supplies and energies. But the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, and your participation in it by Baptism, means the cutting of these tap roots. The new and
final Age dawned with the coming of Jesus Christ. In this new Age God is reestablished as the Source of your life and your hearts are entwined in nothing else than His Word.

The cutting off of the old and the strengthening of the new must go on daily. You don't destroy the old by pious endeavors; you don't strengthen the new roots of your existence by wishful thinking. Until the resurrection of your bodies in glory the conflict of the ages is waged right within your members. Then how can the priestly community cut its old tap-roots day by day and strengthen the new?

Paul tells us that in each celebration of the Eucharist there is a dual proclamation — or, more precisely, the proclamation of two poles which comprise the healthful tension for our life in the world so that we die for life and live for death. He says: as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. In the proclamation of His death is our death — the death to the life in which the heart sinks its tap roots down into guilt and sin, failure and weakness. By His death death itself is killed — our death! Thus is the old age destroyed and the final age ushered in. In the proclamation of His death our own death is killed by Him. But also in the proclamation our hearts sink their roots into the final act of life — His Resurrection and ours. This is our life and hope. In this our hearts are fixed where true joys are to be found. By His resurrection from the dead there is life; by the proclamation of His coming again, we share in the coming resurrection of our bodies. This is our life, the End for which we wait.

Furthermore, all of us not only share in Christ by this proclamation. We share in the proclaiming! When you eat and drink the Bread and Cup of the Lord, you — all of you, each of you — become preachers (proclaimers) of Christ's death and life as your own death and life. We must share and proclaim if we are going to live in the world, dealing with the world as people whose hearts are detached from the world but attached to Him. No man can live without working, planning, suffering and hoping. How shall you evaluate these things, measure them, share in them? You can't ignore them. You dare not become entangled in them as though they were the End. What on earth shall we do with life and with these affairs of life?

The priestly community of God does not keep the Feast in such a way as to escape the hard duties of daily life. The Holy Communion is not an escape mechanism from the calling of life. It is the means God uses of cutting our hearts free from entanglements so that we can engage in hard daily duties with detached hearts! He whose heart is entangled in bread, butter, security, success and immortality through these things, is precisely the man whose heart is not free in his work. He always seeks to achieve some other end by his work. And the end he seeks is the advancement of himself: he is not free to seek God's glory of his neighbor's benefit. The priestly community is free precisely because God has cut it free by the death of Christ and raised it to the hope in Christ's return. Thus the hearts of God's priests are free to carry out the daily duties of life — not to gain for themselves, for in Christ God has already given them all they desire — but to labor as God's co-workers to proclaim the Last Age in Jesus Christ.

Thus our daily activity can be summed up in two words: we wait. We wait for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body. This is no "grin and bear it" sort of grimness; neither is this an "everything will turn out all right" optimism. We don't look to the clouds to find a "silver lining"; we look for the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory and all His Holy angels with Him. This One whom we proclaim when He comes in the final Act, sums up all our desires and hopes now as we proclaim Him.

The Coming One will come. He will appear with pierced hands. It is out of these wounds that our very life with God has come. It is in these hands that our names are written. Here then is our origin and identity, the goal toward which we live. The Coming One is the Present One. He who will come, comes: as often as you eat this Bread and drink the cup ... What He brings when He comes now is what He brought when He came to die: our peace with God. What He brings now, when He comes, He will bring in His final appearing. The judgment then, as His final appearing, is already taken in His death for us, and so we live in hope.

I find extremely little in the New Testament about our "going to heaven," but I find a great deal about His coming again. Our "going" is this that we meet Him in His coming! He will come again and take us to Himself. And even now, He comes to us in the meaning of His death to ready us for His final appearing.

Each celebration of the Eucharist is the priestly community of God placarding Jesus Christ before the eyes of the celebrating community and of the world. Let me say it again: you all become preachers in this act. You preach Jesus' death as your life; you preach Jesus' coming again as your hope, the fulfillment of your longing. That such death and life happen in you and that you become preachers of it is not your doing; neither is it accidental. It is God's doing and it can be done profitably only in faith. Therefore the priestly community of God takes Jesus' words with full seriousness: "Do this in remembrance of Me." Our keeping the feast is a recalling to remembrance and participation in, His birth and life, His death and resurrection.

In such keeping the feast is our joy, for our Brother has given us many brothers. Together we wait for the reunion — at Home!

February, 1959
Much Power and Some Glory

By WALTER SORELL
Drama Editor

A great many plays have been put on lately and a surprisingly great number of them have a touch of humanity, if not of poetry. S. N. Behrman, famous for his drawing room comedies, has joined the many playwrights who have come to Broadway with remembrances of things past — like Inge's "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs," Wolfe's "Look Homeward, Angel," O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey into Night." And now Mr. Behrman looks back with touching fondness at his growing up in a Jewish neighborhood in Worcester, Mass., at the beginning of the century.

It is a period piece written with great sensitivity in the delineation of its characters, with subtlety in painting its mood, with insight and that bit of philosophy and nostalgia to make you forget that it isn't a well constructed play and that its characters do not really develop. It is beautifully staged by Harold Clurman, ably acted by Eli Wallach, Sig Arno, and most notably by Morris Carnovsky.

The difficulty of converting a play into a novel is obvious. The novel stresses the particular; it can digress into any accessory detail. The play must be sharply focused, must relentlessly drive toward its aim and message and have a clearly defined structure. It becomes even more complicated when the material is autobiographical as in Mr. Behrman's case since the writer is so pardonably close to his own past life, or biographical as in the case of Budd Schulberg and Harvey Breit, who wrote a moving play — based on Mr. Schulberg's famed novel "The Disenchanted" — about the disintegration of a talented writer. They have fashioned it after the Scott Fitzgerald model, although their hero, Manley Halliday, may be a composite of many writers of that period, or the symbol of any creative person whose weak character defeats his genius.

It is hardly feasible to show dramatically the struggle of the writer with his creative spirit per se. To bring it off the authors introduced a Hollywood producer and a hopeful young writer as antagonists. Manley Halliday, in need of money to be able to finish his greatest novel, accepts a movie assignment which he finds himself unable to fulfill. During the process of trying to write it he is harassed by his past and mainly by his extravagant wife. He become the victim of his lost illusions and alcohol.

It is an absorbing play which rummages through the past, through the hero's Jazz Age existence with the help of flashbacks, and builds up its contrast with the cold realities of the present (the end of the Thirties). It is written with a touch of poetry, and the leading part is played by Jason Robards, Jr., with great understanding for the struggle of the artist whose visions and hopes burn to ashes while colliding with the strangling necessities and insistencies of life.

Graham Greene is a writer with a message, and in his novel "The Power and the Glory" he depicts a priest who is a disgrace to his calling, drinks more than can be good for anyone, and has an illegitimate child. He is the last remaining priest in one of the southern states of Mexico during the anti-clerical days in the nineteen-thirties. He takes great risks in fulfilling his clerical duties, in conducting secret Masses, in procuring the necessary wine for it. He wants to escape to be absolved from his own sins, but returns to his native village to administer the last rites to a dying sinner, although he knows he is going to his death and damnation.

In the novel it is made quite clear that he only wants to escape because of his desperate longing to confess. In the play this essential point is not even alluded to. Denis Cannan and Pierre Bost who are responsible for the adaptation have come up with a few stunning scenes, have given us the atmosphere of this Mexican struggle between religion, primitivism and atheism in the cloak of progress, but the play remains diffuse and never clearly states its message. On the contrary, the arguments as presented on stage weigh heavily in favor of the anti-clerical viewpoint. And this was certainly not Mr. Greene's intention. The production at the Phoenix Theatre, however, with Fritz Weaver as the priest, was flawlessly and excitingly staged by Stuart Vaughan.

In contrast to it, a clearly defined story is told by Norman Nicholson in "The Old Man of the Mountains" which E. Martin Browne staged simply and impressively at Union Theological Seminary. It retells the story of Elijah in a contemporary mountain country and, in beautiful language, also shows the struggle between faith and progress, and proves the blessings of what God has given us in nature. This story never falters on its way to its conclusion as "The Power and the Glory" does. In transposing it into our time, Mr. Nicholson does not deviate in a sophisticated way from the prophet's story, but brings it closer to our emotional understanding and turns its symbols into living ideas.
From the Chapel

"Lord, That I May Receive My Sight"

By H. C. Duwe
Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church
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And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought unto Him; and when he was come near, He asked him, saying: "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" And he said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." (Luke 18:35-41) Then spake Jesus again unto them saying: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life."

(John 8:12)

"Lord, that I may receive my sight." That ought to be the cry of mankind. But, as a matter of fact, it is not. That's a strange thing to say on the campus of a university — a university which has on its seal the torch, the symbol of light, and the words: "In Thy light shall we see light." In a sense every school, every college, every university is testimony to man's quest for light, for better sight, for greater vision.

So it would seem. Yet the history of the race bears out, I think, that we are not really seeking light. We are seeking knowledge, we are seeking power, we are seeking the equipment by which we can realize our desires, forge our own destiny, by which we can make our way in a tough world.

These things we seek. But these things we can possess ... even use ... in the dark. Light is something else again. It has to do with possessing and using these things in terms of a very specific meaning and purpose. It has to do with proper value and perspective. Above all, it has to do with responsibility. The people who "sat in darkness," says the Scripture.

There isn't much you can do in darkness but sit. And it is always comfortable to have a reason for sitting. But light gives the opportunity for, and therefore places one under the necessity of, action. A man must work while it is day. A man may be excused for what he does not see; but when he sees, he is responsible. Therefore darkness is more comfortable, more compatible to the slothful flesh.

The Messiah came, bringing light. And the tragedy is, says St. John, that men love darkness rather than light. The Jews did not want the Messiah to bring light. They had enough light to see what they wanted to see. The Messiah was to take away the obstacles that stood in the way of the kind of peace, prosperity, and power they wanted.

Nor were the disciples eager for light. When Jesus began to open to them the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, and especially when He began to light up the path He had to travel to accomplish it, they "understood not these things," nor is there any record that they asked for further illumination. As a matter of fact, they changed the subject; they began to discuss among themselves who would be greatest in the kingdom to come.

Over the centuries the situation has not changed. The cry of contemporary man is not, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Rather, it is: "Lord, that I may have peace of mind." "Lord, that I may be well-adjusted." Or, "Lord, that I might be self-centered, yet happy; self-concerned, but a useful citizen." "Lord, that we might have greed and hatred and business as usual, but not atomic war."

All this the Messiah is to bring. All this — but not light. Save us, above all, from the light that would make us serious about sin, about love, about the will and purpose of God.

But the Saviour can be manipulated no more today than in the days of His flesh. Follow Him, and you shall have light. You shall have the problem of light, if you please. Christianity as peace, comfort, surcease from sorrow can be a colossal illusion. It is first of all light; it is a call to responsibility; it is a demand for obedience. And in the wake of such obedience may come peace and comfort and surcease from sorrow.

MAY come, you understand. The open-eyed people never had an easy time of it. They "were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented."

Think about these things the next time you are inclined to consider that religion might be a good sleeper course. There is danger in light. But there is also privilege and glory.

Looking back now — with the advantage of hindsight — would you rather have been Elijah or Ahab; Jeremiah or Nebuchadnezzar; Paul or Nero? Thanks to the likes of Elijah, Jeremiah, and Paul we can sit today in the chapel of a Christian institution and worship Him who is the Light of life. What guarantee is there that coming generations will have that light if you will not bear it in your time?
On the front of the Church of Saint Aegidius in Augsburg, the architect, Thomas Wechs, and the sculptor, Matthew Pittroff, have developed a most interesting and impressive set of fourteen figures. The figures take on the general form of pillars set in as supports of the various levels in the Church. Pittroff, the sculptor, says, “The work was primarily forming the images by hand and if I had to do it again, I would allow myself to be guided even more by the simple, direct and unambiguous spirit which is part of the material itself. The artistic would have to come out of that abstraction which is unconsciously the part of every element in which we work.”

This is the type of art and form which speaks most understandably in such a building as the Valparaiso University Chapel. The figures were formed out of a mixture of slag, clinkers, clay and reinforced concrete. They carry in them a tremendous elemental strength while they seem to perform a very worthy and true function in the facade of Saint Aegidius Church. It will, undoubtedly, be a long time before such forms will be thoroughly understood and appreciated and yet they should not be too difficult to understand. If you have ever admired a gnarled tree on the wild Pacific Coast at Carmel or in Oregon; if you have ever thrilled at the bold rock face of a cliff rising hundreds of feet into the air and have read into the fact of it figures and forms that only you could see but could not make immediately intelligible to others, then you know what this art is. If ever you lazied on a hillside in the summertime, watching angels, and ships in full sail, and flocks of sheep, and roaring waves shape and reshape themselves in quiet forms, you can understand this elemental art.

Sometimes work of this kind becomes almost as elemental as the skeleton of steel which has a beauty all its own, even before the skyscraper rises to fill it in with steel and glass and stone. What you bring to your view from within is just as important as anything that the picture can bring you from without. For the benighted African who never had a chance to hear the story of that Holy Thursday night, Da Vinci’s “Last Supper” would mean very little, and yet for us, in the Christian tradition, it is the high point of real sacrifice and understanding.

Unless we are to continue to be mere copyers, we must again allow the freedom of mind and soul which reads walls, and cliffs, and clouds, and shadows of candlelight, all with the same God-given imagination and quiet understanding. Really, it doesn’t make much difference whether you saw the great ship under full canvas in the sky with angels like out-riders of the wind atop the masts; I saw it, and it gave me words and dreams and thoughts that I had never had before. What difference if somebody says, “But it is only the sky you are looking at,” when I have seen, through the Chapel’s tall windows, choirs of angels and flashing lights of planes, and stars that I had never seen before. You are an artist, you know! You may deny it for so long a time and then one day, because you see a simple altar through the mist of tears, it will be certainly the throne of grace, and life will never be the same.
I have heard many performances of Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, in D Minor. Sometimes I have been thrilled to the marrow; sometimes I have asked, "Does the conductor actually know the score?"

I have read and listened to innumerable comments on Beethoven's Ninth. At the moment my thoughts go back to two remarks which I regard as particularly shocking. Many years ago a man reputed to be a conductor for making the kettledrums prominent in the second movement. "Have you ever read the score?" I asked this carping soul. But the faultfinder remained unabashed. In all likelihood he did not have the ability to read a score. On another occasion one of the foremost critics in our land spoke of Beethoven's melody for Friedrich Schiller's Ode to Joy — which, as you know, is the most important part of the fourth movement — as "banal." I nearly swooned. But I did not question his right to arrive at and to express his startling opinion.

What was my reaction when I listened to Otto Klemperer's reading of Beethoven's Ninth (Angel 3577B)? To say that I like the performance would be an inexcusable understatement, for I soon realized that Klemperer approaches the work with awe and that his exposition abounds in unmistakable evidences of scholarship and artistry of the highest type. It is true that the tempo he chooses for the Scherzo is a bit slower than Arturo Toscanini's or Bruno Walter's. But the pace he sets does not do violence to the movement. Klemperer, I believe, has as much right to conclude that here the tempo must be a little more deliberate as Toscanini and Walter ever had to decide in favor of a pace somewhat more rapid. Klemperer underscores the fugal portions of this movement with the utmost clarity. In fact, clarity is one of the hallmarks of his exposition of the entire masterpiece — clarity dominated by a heart-warming depth of understanding.

The excellent Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus present Beethoven's Ninth under Klemperer's masterful direction. The soloists are Hans Hotter, baritone; Aase Nordmo Loevberg, soprano; Christa Ludwig, mezzo-soprano; and Waldemar Kmentt, tenor. On the fourth side of this outstanding two-disc set Klemperer presents some of the incidental music which Beethoven composed for Johann Wolfgang Goethe's Egmont. He has chosen the awe-inspiring overture, Die Trommel geruhtet, Freudvoll und leidvoll, and Klaerchens Tod. Birgit Nilsson, the Swedish-born soprano, is the soloist.

Franz Joseph Haydn composed dozens of symphonies. You have not heard them all. Neither have I. But you undoubtedly have a favorite among those with which you are acquainted. I do. For many years I have taken special pleasure in the Symphony No. 100, in G Major, subtitled Military Symphony. This is a buoyant work. Its melodies are captivating. In fact, they are irresistible. Consequently, I was happy to receive an excellent recording of the Military Symphony as played by the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under Ferdinand Leitner (Decca DL 9989). On the opposite side of this disc Leitner presents an equally satisfying performance of another beautiful symphony from Haydn's facile pen. It is the Symphony No. 2, in B Flat Major.

Sometimes I ask myself, "Do you prefer Haydn's Military Symphony to his little-known Symphony No. 91, in E Flat Major?" Then I conclude that No. 91 is just as beautiful in every way as No. 100. For one reason or another this work is rarely performed. Fortunately, one can hear it played with an admirable sense of style by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under Eugen Jochum (Decca DL 9984). Another symphony in E flat major is recorded on the same disc. It is No. 103, which is usually called the Symphony with the Drum Roll (Symphonie mit dem Paukenwirbel), because the slow introduction begins with a kettledrum roll.

Some Recent Recordings

RELIGION

THE SURGE OF PIETY IN AMERICA
By A. Roy Eckardt (Association Press, $3.50)

Mass revivals in Madison Square Garden. Norman Vincent Peale consistently on the best-seller lists. The American Legion sponsoring a "Back-to-God" movement. Proportion of church members to total population growing year after year. "Prayer breakfasts" along the Potomac. All these evidences of a revived and widespread interest in religion on the part of Americans have furnished top-drawer material for the theological and sociological analysts in the past few years. Now A. Roy Eckardt, Methodist minister and head of the department of religion at Lehigh University, pulls together what Eckhardt calls "the surge of piety in America"; it is even more difficult to come to terms with these phenomena. But since they are not just phenomena, but evidences of people seeking to discover value and meaning — perhaps even God? — they must be understood by the man whose concern with religion is not purely academic.

The result is a book that could be read with profit by anyone interested in religion and religions, but a book that ought to be read by the American clergy. It is difficult enough to thread one's way through what Eckhardt calls "the surge of piety in America"; it is even more difficult to come to terms with these phenomena. But since they are not just phenomena, but evidences of people seeking to discover value and meaning — perhaps even God? — they must be understood by the man whose concern with religion is not purely academic. It is not to be expected that everyone will agree with everything the author says. His general theological orientation is neo-orthodox (Niebuhrian and Tillichian, if that's any more specific). But the book is thoughtful, honest, and above all, humble, free from that note of smug but finally unconstructive superiority which characterizes so much of the critical writing on America's religious revival. And the reader who feels he must choose some other interpretation at crucial points will find valuable assistance in measuring the adequacy of his own efforts at understanding.

PAUL T. HEYNE

LUTHER ON WORSHIP
By Vilmos Vajta (Muhlenberg Press, $3.25)

From the dust cover of this book we learn that U. S. Leopold is the translator. The book itself does not mention this. Let us hope the dust covers don't get lost! Hungarian born Vajta, now a Swedish citizen, studied at the Universities of Lund and Upsala. He is director of the Department of Theology of the Lutheran World Federation.

In this book the author wants to set the inner motives for reform in worship "within the framework of his (Luther's) whole theology." He disagrees that Luther was liturgically uninterested, but at the same time feels the study of Luther on worship has failed to take into account a systematic presentation of Luther's theology of worship. To this task he addresses himself in this book. He links "Luther's theology of worship with his teaching on creation, the atonement, the church, and justification" (xii).

Section I is titled "Principles of Worship." Two chapters are devoted to "Worship and Idolatry" and "Beneficium and Sacrificium." Beginning with a study of Luther's exposition of the First Commandment, Vajta supports the thesis: man the creature is bound to believe. This is the law implanted in him by his Creator. Man, therefore, is always engaged in the worship of an idol, or he is engaged in the worship of the true God, the One Who establishes fellowship with man, that is, the God of revelation. "Faith cannot be neutral. It is no empty concept, but always filled, whether by God or by an idol. But in either case, the true God is at work" (p. 6). "Even idolatry betrays the destiny of man" (p. 7). "Those who worship idols meet the true God in his wrath" (p. 7).

However, true faith is not the work of man: "but is Christ himself coming to man ... Christian faith cannot exist unless Christ himself continues to come, to fight, and to vanquish" (pp. 7, 8). God is always at work in the creation, but when men make their own gods, they imagine they can pacify the true God with their endeavors. The God Who discloses Himself in Christ comes into the creation "for us"; the incarnation is connected with God and therefore with worship. Faith is not man's "quest for God," but is receiving God as He gives Himself. Thus faith and worship find their unity in Christ: the revelation of God and the content of faith.

Vajta continues with an examination (and refutation) of some former ways of describing Luther on worship.

In "Beneficium and Sacrificium" the author traces the history of the Mass from the institution by Christ to the Sacrifice of the Mass. Luther's concern was not so much the form of the Mass, but whether people were taught to deal with the God of Mercy (the One Who comes to establish fellowship by grace) or with the God of wrath (the One Who must be appeased by the offering of man). The true use of the Mass is faith, not works. God is dealing with man in the Mass to give Himself to man for salvation; hence faith is the proper use of the Mass. Vajta has a section on Mass as communion and the private mass. In this he deals only briefly with such a document of Luther as the treatise of 1519. His summary of this section is: "Worship is the gift of the gracious God through the incarnate and suffering Christ for his congregation which receives the gift by faith and so enters into fellowship with God. Thus worship is a participation in the work of Christ" (p. 63).

The author now expands his thesis that the study of Luther on worship must pivot around a) the work of God; and b) the work of faith.

Section II, "Worship as the Work of God," carries the following chapters: "The Proclamation of the Word," "The Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper," and "The Office of the Ministry as Impartation of the Gift of God." The chapter on Proclamation describes preaching as God's act among us. One regrets that (p. 73) the critique of Aulen's Christus Victor is omitted from the translation. Great stress on the "for us" nature of preaching appears in such statements: "To preach is more than to report and comment on certain events of the past. It is to make Christ our contemporary so that his death and resurrection become our own and the redemption which he wrought becomes our righteousness" (p. 73). I find a healthy and accurate presentation of Law and Gospel in this section (as well as in many other parts of the book).

Under the Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper the author makes a distinction in the sense of the meaning of "presence": 1) God's omnipresence and 2) His presence in the incarnate Christ, in the church and in the service. The Incarnate Christ is present in creation, but He is "present-for-us" in the Word, and therefore 'worship may be defined as his presence in the Word and Sacrament within the communion of saints" (p. 91). This section on the "Presence" ought to be examined thoroughly, for he describes Christ (incarnate) as present in the creation, but "Christ for us" as present in the sacramental elements by the Word. Statements on pp. 95 and 99 appear contradictory.

For his description of the Ministry, Vajta uses the Luther concept of the two kingdoms, and, I must say, does a fresh job of description in this manner. Some will feel slighted on his description of ordination; others will rejoice loudly.

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The final section (three chapters) on “Worship as the work of Faith,” the author uses to describe the coming of Christ in the Word as being met with Faith. By faith he means faith as receiving the coming Word (p. 127). There follows a description of faith under such rubrics as “passivity,” sabbath rest; preaching, as including the listener; and faith as using the Sacrament; i.e. receiving the benefits of Christ. An excellent section!

The next chapter, “The Priestly Sacri­fice of Believers,” is one of the most stimu­lating of the book, and furnishes more room for new insights among us. He describes the sacrifice as 1) killing the Old Adam and offering praises to God; 2) prayer, intercession for the brethren; 3) material offerings, which, when done in faith, are called “spiritual offerings.” Es­pecially delightful is his emphasis from Luther, that praise and adoration are a two sided act: a renunciation of our own material offerings, which, when done in the room for new insights among us. He

Sacrament; i.e. receiving the benefits of the church. It will not only open up new and worship are the right mechanics. The

vocation, professional witnesses and worship: liturgy and worship. It will not only open up new problems that cannot be solved with­out getting to their roots. But of course he is wrong. What our country needs is to be protected from the likes of John Gates. He is obviously an atheist, or he wouldn’t have joined the Communist Party. He has a criminal record, not only because of his Smith Act conviction, but also because he disrupted the peace by making a speech in Warren, Ohio, and was found in contempt of court when he refused to identify the per­sons who worked with him in preparation of a pamphlet — artists, lay-out men, and other privately employed conspirators. His penitence is patently insincere: “I did not quit the American Communist Party,” he writes, “in order to embrace the ideas of John Foster Dulles, or to enlist in the cold war.” Even worse: “I did not . . . quit the American Communist Party to discover the virtues of capitalism as a sys­tem.” And he remains a trouble-maker. He argues that socialists have defined radicalism in too narrow terms, and that Communists have insisted that the game be played by their rules or no dice. But then he goes on to insinuate evidences of radicalism in many phases of American life: in churches (sic!), among scientists, and “in all walks of life where men and women realize that the ‘rat-race’ of their daily lives must be replaced by something more sensible, more humane, more creative.”

The final sentence of the book serves as a dedication of sorts, and lays his motives bare: “To the youth of America,” whom he would now like to corrupt, “in the hope that they will succeed where we did not, I dedicate this book.” But it is very well written. And perhaps we could recommend the book on the theory that we ought to know the enemy at a glance.

Paul T. Heyne

DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

By Boris Pasternak (Pantheon, $5.00)

Publication of Doctor Zhivago, the novel by Boris Pasternak, stands out as the literary event of the past year. That the most publicized book of the year should prove to be a masterpiece, one of the truly great novels of our time, is a rare and wonderful thing. If the furor created by Pasternak’s rejection of the Nobel Prize induces more people to read his extraordinary novel, it will have served a good pur­pose; for even those who come merely out of curiosity to “taste and see” will find that it is good and will stay and be re­freshed.

Unfortunately, some of the publicity the book has received is misleading. Press releases which hail Dr. Zhivago primarily as an account of the Russian Revolution and as an indictment of Soviet philosophy overlook completely the Christian statement of the nature and destiny of man that is the core of the novel. Pasternak is concerned here with the sacredness of each soul in the eyes of God, with the dignity and freedom of the individual versus enforced conformity. The political and historical aspects of the book simply serve as a framework on which he weaves his main theme of life, death, and resurrec­tion.

The following quotations serve as examples of Pasternak’s eloquence and thought.

History: “What you don’t understand is that, if it is possible to be an atheist, it is possible not to know whether God exists, or why, and yet believe that man does not live in a state of nature but in history, and that history as we know it now began with Christ, and that Christ’s Gospel is its foundation. Now what is history? It is the centuries of systematic explorations of the riddle of death, with a view to overcoming death. That’s why people discover mathematical infinity, and electromagnetic waves, that’s why they write symphonies. Now, you can’t advance in this direction without a certain faith. You can’t make such discoveries without spiritual equipment. And the basic elements of
Snow: "Outside there was no trace of the road, the graveyard, or the kitchen garden, nothing but the blizzard, the air smoking with snow. It was almost as if the snowstorm had caught sight of Yura and, conscious of its power to terrify, roared and howled, doing everything possible to impress him. Turning over and over in the sky, length after length of whiteness unwound over the earth and shrouded it. The blizzard was alone in the world; it had no rival."

Art: "As he scribbled his odds and ends, he made a note reaffirming his belief that art always serves beauty, and beauty is delight in form, and form is the key to organic life, since no living thing can exist without it, so that every work of art, including tragedy, expresses the joy of existence."

Spring: "First signs of spring. Thaw. The air smells of buttered pancakes and vodka, as at Shrovetide. A sleepy, oily sun blinking in the forest, sleepy pines blinking their needles like eyelashes, oily puddles glistening at noon. The hero of the story is Yuri Andreevich Zhivago, a doctor of medicine by train-

This equipment are in the Gospels. What are they? To begin with, love of one's neighbor, which is the supreme form of vital energy. Once it fills the heart of man it has to overflow and spend itself. And then the two basic ideals of modern man — without them he is unthinkable — the idea of free personality and the idea of life as sacrifice. Mind you, all this is still extraordinarily new. There was no history in this sense among the ancients. They had blood and beastliness and cruelty and pockmarked Caligulas who had no idea of how inferior the system of slavery is. They had the boastful dead eternity of bronze monuments and marble columns. It was not until after the coming of Christ that time and man could breathe freely. It was not until after Him that men began to live toward the future. Man does not die in a ditch like a dog — but at home in history, while the work toward the conquest of death is in full swing, he dies sharing in this work."

"Who is 'being buried?' — 'Zhivago,' they said. — 'Oh, I see. That's what it is.' — 'It isn't him. It's his wife.' — Well, it comes to the same thing. May her soul rest in peace. It's a fine funeral." His Uncle Kolia, a former priest un-frocked at his own request, who leads him out of the graveyard, plays a great part in molding the boy's character. "'Yes, there are gifted men,' said Nikolai Niko-
alievich; 'but the fashion nowadays is all for groups and societies of every sort. Gregariousness is always the refuge of mediocrities, whether they swear by Soloviev or Kant or Marx. Only individuals seek the truth, and they shun those whose sole concern is not the truth. How many things in the world deserve our loyalty? Very few indeed. I think one should be loyal to immortality, which is another word for life, a stronger word for it. One must be true to immortality — true to Christ!' "

Zhivago is married and busy with his medical practice when he is called up for front-line duty in World War I. It is during this period that he becomes ac-

Although Zhivago finds Larisa and love in the nearby town of Yuriatin, he also finds that life in the East is more dangerous than in Moscow. He is kidnapped by a band of wandering partisans and forced to serve as a medic in the Red-White struggle in Siberia. When, upon his escape from the partisans, he discovers that his wife has made her way back to Moscow and on to Paris, he begins to live with Larisa. During their brief life together, an eerie combination of rapturous love and agonizing fear of imminent arrest and death, Zhivago re-

The poems of Yuri Zhivago, published after his death, compose the final chapter. At first glance they seem to be an appendix, but after reading them it becomes clear that here Pasternak's theme receives its full development. The last poem, "Garden of Gethsemane," ends on this triumphant note:

The entire story, which is filled with symbolism, covers too much ground, intro-

As might be expected, Arnold Toynbee's travels are bound to be something special, and when he spends a year in preparation and seventeen months in the execution, what emerges is a philosophical, history-

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EAST TO WEST
By Arnold Toynbee (Oxford University Press, $4.50)

As might be expected, Arnold Toynbee's travels are bound to be something special, and when he spends a year in preparation and seventeen months in the execution, what emerges is a philosophical, history-

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CARLENE BARTLETT

As might be expected, Arnold Toynbee's travels are bound to be something special, and when he spends a year in preparation and seventeen months in the execution, what emerges is a philosophical, history-
time in each he manages to use them wisely. A real traveler seeks knowledge, not comfort, he maintains. And if a journey by muleback through the Peruvian jungle, or a hike barefoot to a hillside Hindu shrine is part of the cost, so much the better.

For a man of sixty-seven, this must have been quite an ordeal, as well as the culmination of a life's drama. First, he crossed the Atlantic to South America, from there to New Zealand and Australia, then to Southeast Asia, Japan, India, and home via the Middle East. Everywhere his imagination evokes centuries lost, cultures risen and fallen, conquerors come and gone. His imagery is superb. "Coastal Peru is a tawny desert slashed at right angles to the coastline by sinuous ribbons of green. . . . The road is cut into the mountainside halfway up, as if a giant had run his sweep with brooms in a fight to keep the road clear of the perpetually encroaching sand. . . . If Dante had been with us, this terrifying section of the Pan-American highway would have been immortalized in his picture of Purgatory."

Each of the seventy-three brief chapters is complete in itself, a tantalizing introduction that always leaves one wanting more. The best part of the volume (only 220 pages in all) deals with India and Persia, Israel and the Fertile Crescent — the birthplace of world civilization. Toynebee is as much alive to the present as he is to the past — the oil of Dhahran, Arab refugees in Gaza, dam construction in Pakistan, and everywhere the eclipse of western European colonialism. Trying to catch a glimpse of Nazareth from the Jordan side of the barbed wire frontier, he muses on the perversity of human nature. "If Jesus were to take ship from Tiberias today, seeking to land on this side of the lake, He would draw fire from two alerted armies."

At every opportunity, Toynebee reminds us of the "light streaming from a common source" whenever Christian, Moslem, or Jew can meet Hindu or Buddhist in a spirit of charity and mutual understanding. In his view, "all are Ultimate Reality in the form of a God who, like his human creatures, is a person, and who is merciful and compassionate." Original sin he calls the brutal irrational spirit that is all mankind's common heritage; our never-ending struggle against it ought to make all peoples humbly aware of their deepest kinship with each other.

To this reviewer, East to West was a delight from beginning to end, and as far removed from the Burton Holmes approach as Reinhold Niebuhr is from Norman Vincent Peale.
giance is to the school of Schuetteck. The school, in this work, finds its mean between the "literalism" of Kittredge and the "superstitiosity" of Coleridge and Bradley. Against the latter it argues that Shakespeare's audience are nonexistent in his plays. Many critics will balk at such a limitation of genius in any period and in any literary form. They will balk at the idea that the complexity of Richard III can be caught, with any final significance, within the flat outline of a dramatic stereotype. And they will feel that Iago's aggression against Cassio ("He hath a daily beauty in his life. That makes me ugly") does not so much lead back to an allegorical representation of evil as open a dimension in naturalistic psychology to which the author fairly scrupulously closes his mind. Dr. Spivack, however, must be conceded his point of view. It is everywhere consistent and is developed with extraordinary clarity.

J. E. SAVESON

HERBLOCK'S SPECIAL FOR TODAY

By Herbert Block (Simon and Schuster, $3.95)

For those who are acquainted with Herblock's cartoons and not his writing abilities, this book is a good illustration that his talents are considerable in both fields. It is a combination of both.

The author indicates that he wouldn't mind doing a little more in the writing field; the publisher of the Washington Post and Times Herald ought to take him up on it. A once-a-week syndicated column by Herblock would be fully as stimulating as his cartoons.

Here are a few of his comments:

On John Foster Dulles: "I do not lay the blame for all the troubles of the world at Mr. Dulles' doorstep. And it wouldn't do much good if I did. That's the last place he'd be likely to see them."

On Vice-President Nixon after the spatnik affair: "He made a stirring speech telling Americans to get away from their weeping walls and to get behind our missile people and help them. 'We've got to work to do,' he said. 'Let's get on with it like Americans.' That certainly sounded affirmative, except that you got the feeling he was talking to the wrong fellows. Unless he had expected us average guys to build satellites in our back yards, there wasn't much we could do to get on with the job. It was really the men running the government who should have been doing that."

"Oh, but he was a good talker, though... He made one to the American Football Coaches Association. . . . This was an occasion that had just the right All-American atmosphere, and he put in a lot of sport phrases, which showed he was a regular guy. And as you took in his words, you could practically smell the locker room. 'This is no time to get out the crying towel to throw in the sponge,' he said. And it was grand to hear such vigorous statements."

On traveling to the moon: "I guess I'm just an old stick-in-the-earth."

On the Supreme Court's school integration decision: "There was an almost ear-shattering silence from the executive branch of government on this issue. There was a complete absence of the kind of moral leadership which, through firm but friendly statements, conferences and commissions, might have employed the enormous prestige of the Presidency to smooth the way for integration."

On personality politics: "In recent years the personality-peddling has been highly criticized and has been putting issues and debate further into the background."

There is much more of the same - as well as his drawings - in this book by our country's leading political cartoonist.

PAUL SIMON

MISTRESS TO AN AGE

By J. Christopher Herold (Bobs-Merrill, $5.95)

The reading of this biography of Mme. de Stael was undertaken with some reluctance, as another had just been reviewed in these columns when the book was received. However, we do not like to ignore Book-of-the-Month Club selections, although many times we must because of failure to receive copies of their choices.

Initial inertia being overcome, the reader laid down the book only when urged by grumblings and mumblings from a sleepy spouse, who thought the light bothered him, and what in the world do you think you are doing, anyway, reading about some fool woman, long since dead, at two o'clock in the morning?

Well, that's the kind of book it is.

Germaine Necker de Stael used only a portion of her prodigious energies in an attempt to influence the politics of her day; yet this "whirlwind in petticoats," as Heinrich Heine called her, was spoken of as the "third great power" - the other two being England and Russia! Although she wrote novels and literary criticism, it is as a political thinker, a philosopher of history, that she is at her considerable best. Her writings not only transmit the ideas of the eighteenth century, but contain at least the germ of practically all the nineteenth century's political thought. Indeed, the author makes the statement that a liberal writer today could easily draw up a brief for his beliefs simply by borrowing from Mme. de Stael's ideas. Freedom she thought of as being "the right of the human spirit to progress." Toward this end, reason and virtue are guiding principles; but enthusiasm (not fanaticism, which is fatal), "the sacred spark," is its very life.

She could not keep quiet; nor even for the sake of remaining in her beloved Paris. Her very vocal intransigence toward Napoleon on grounds of ideology resulted in her exile from France for twelve long years. "What," asked the First Consul plaintively, "does Mme. de Stael want?" "Good Lord," she replied, "it's not what I want, but what I think!"

A keenly analytical and utterly rational intellect, combined with apparent indefatigability, could have produced inestimably greater results, except for one thing: a large part of Mme. de Stael's time, and an even greater part of her energy, was expended in an incessant struggle to dominate the men she loved. This struggle was always undignified and frequently indecent. In an age which placed less value upon virtue than upon discretion, she shocked friends and enemies alike by her defiance of public opinion and her ruthless pursuit of happiness.

Mr. Herold's book is a notable example of the biographer's art. It is much more inclusive than anyone has a right to expect. It is penetrating, profound, brilliant. The style is urbane. There are so many instances of unselconscious wit, that choosing an example to quote would prove as insidious a temptation as eating the first peanut.

AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

By Randall Stewart (Louisiana State University Press, $3.50)

This slim, well-written book fills a need long sensed by earnest teachers of literature. Its Episcopalian author is a distinguished professor of the subject discussed, a third editor of a successful textbook, The Literature of the United States, a devout believer in sin and grace. To Dr. Stewart (as to this reviewer) the Bible is clearly the greatest of books because God wrote it for fallen mankind's profit and pleasure. Christian qualities derived from it by literary men and women he reveres as the mainsprings of our culture.

Two side-glances merit comment here. The Preface takes to task those teachers whose religious neutrality (neutral is related etymologically to neutral) eviscerates any discussion of their subject. Chapter 5, "The Amoralists," in analyzing the importance of suffering as in tragedy - to lead from cross to crown - reproduces our college advisory system for "minimizing individual responsibility."

This little treatise makes no pretense to completeness or authoritativeness. It aspires at most to an explanation, tentative and fragmentary, of a large and neglected area. I should be happy if it should prove to be the cause, or
time thus, because the very amusement becomes trite. The Foreword and Notes are appropriately restricted. Farce, burlesque, and melodrama predominate: is this, actually, the Comic Tradition in America (as the title claims)? If so, have we only low comedy directed against the restraints of our stuffy society and filled with incongruity or marked by contradictions, instead of the high and moral purpose of, e.g., comic satire?

HERBERT H. UMBACH

FOOTSTEPS IN THE ATTIC

By Stanley McNail (Galley Sail Publications, fifty cents)

Footsteps in the Attic, a collection of ten poems in paper back, leaves a strong impression of being hot off the Bohemian press and hot off the author's macabre imagination. Stanley McNail's world is well conveyed in such lines as: "Gravel squeaks under the feet of ghosts/ Strolling in the driveway" or "A dirt-colored cat with wine between its toes/ Was sniffing at the rinds of his eyes." Creatures of this world range from the wino, whose voice was the "color of rusted griefs," to the three lean sisters, Amanda, Theresa, and Laura, the last of whom "bloodied her mouth, and gushed her face." And rode a black hound to the trysting place," to the Zolzales, whose main function in the scheme of things, according to the footnote, is "to mete out a certain poetic justice." The speaker of some of the poems does such things as growing antlers, pursuing a "thing" down the kitchen drain, and visiting Elsie, who "smiling, asks us both inside." Though years have passed since Elsie died. Footsteps in the Attic is great fun, though it is very doubtful that it is great poetry.

J. E. SAVESON

FICTION

TWO WOMEN

By Alberto Moravia (Translated by Angus Davidson) (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, $4.95)

Certainly a good many of the world's people today could tell a story of World War II, whether it be from the islands of the Pacific, the beaches of Normandy, the hollows of Stalingrad, the black markets of Paris, the parade grounds of Fifth Avenue or the countless other theaters of that great catastrophe. And each story is a different one, not necessarily one of battlefields and military maneuvers. So in the popular conception of the term, this is not a war story even though the road of true tragedy is the downhill path onto which two women, Cesira and her seventeen-year-old daughter Rosetta, are driven during the last year of the war in Italy as they are forced to leave Rome because of the lack of food.

Almost as vagabonds roaming the peasant country east and south of their beloved city, they are victims of unthinkable hardships, physical, mental and spiritual. More like wild animals than human beings, for months they struggled for survival itself against the very personal atrocities of the lawlessness that is total war. Indeed, "the war really had changed everything, and I had proof of it under my own eyes, in my own daughter, who had changed from an angel of purity and goodness to an atheistic, mindless whore." Cesira, herself, was filled with a despair and a frenzy, for she saw a world in which she did not want to live, "in which good men and honest women had ceased to count for anything and criminals behaved as if they were the masters." However, the tenderness, perseverance and hope in the heart of Cesira were at last rewarded on the great day of their return from months of wanderings and of degradations to their shop and their little flat in Rome, for as they rode along the dusty road, Rosetta's eyes were filled with tears "partly for herself and for me and for all those who had been stricken and maimed and destroyed by the war." Thus with this new-born confidence and hope in the future, this little story of two women is ended.

With the tongue of Cesira, the author has told with compassion and understanding of a woman and of a very personal story of a very personal war, with delicacy and frankness, with gentleness and honesty.

JEAN BICHEREL

FOOTNOTE:

A history of Valparaiso University, 1859-1959, commissioned by the University's Committee on the Centennial and written by the managing editor of The Cresset, will be published on February 2. The book runs to 240 pages, including 32 pages of pictures and twelve pages of appendices. The price is $3.75. Orders should be sent to The Committee on the Centennial, Valparaiso University.
“The best way to have both some kind of happiness and sex is some form of prostitution for which you pay — or some other good arrangement by which you can get the milk delivered without buying the cow.” This subject for the successors to Kinsey to whom I had been talking in Miller’s Tavern went on with what he really meant to say: “How come? How come? Why did I ever get married?”

What could I answer: “I don’t know. Why did you?”

“Why did I? I’ll tell you. I was young and like everybody else when they were young. I just drifted into marriage.”

Through his alcoholic haze, he presented a brief that went something like this: 1. Not many people are really in love when they get married; 2. Four months, four years after marriage, “you’d never get married to the woman who’s now your wife”; 3. “One has to learn to love his husband or wife”; 4. According to this wayward soul, “it’s a long, drawn-out affair to get to love one another — lots of obstacles when you’re always around one another”; 5. “She knew what I was when she married me!”

At one point in the conversation, he suggested that husbands and wives are usually idiots to a considerable degree. So much so, he said, “one is surprised there aren’t more husband-wife murders nowadays.”

“But, mister,” I asked this person I’d never seen before, “how’d you get involved in such problems?” He answered: “How’d I get involved, that’s easy. I got interested in girls, in all girls, any girl.” Apparently, to simply have one to whom he was married seemed at the time to constitute a more facile and fluent arrangement. According to him, “The trouble now is I got to be around all the time unless I can sneak down to this tavern — sometimes I get asked to leave. That’s the way it is, fellow.”

Drunk or not, philosopher or not — this person was not uttering “balderdash” altogether. In a way, this was his way of working out the Biblical injunction that “it’s better to marry than to burn.” I suspect that many marriages are arrangements of satisfying in a socially proper way the passions that burn almost eternally. I had an instructor in the dim, dark days who once said (and I found the statement in old lecture notes): “There, it sometimes seems to me, is more adultery and fornication within the marriage relationship than outside of it.”

Somewhere along the way I asked the tavern companion: “Well, if things are as bad as that, why don’t you get a divorce?” He said his wife was against divorce. For them, apparently, it seemed that it was better to burn now than to divorce. It is almost as hard to get divorced as to get married. An old wag put it this way: “You can’t live with them and you can’t live without them!”

Lot of people have drifted into marriage, it is safe to suppose, because in our society it is the thing to do. Mothers, friends, and even enemies worry when John Jones does not “take a wife to himself and cleave to her until death severs the arrangement.” The reward-punishment system of our society almost demands that a man, to be successful, ought to get married. The married man will be successful according to the mythology because he is stable, he will stay on the beaten path except at conventions, he will have children and this well make him work harder, and, all in all, he will have little time for play and foolishness.

This is especially true in the small town where I live. You can have a concubine or mistress on the side, certainly true on occasion in my town, but if you are married to one wife, like the vigilant bishop, you may remain on occasion also a blameless citizen.

That one wife is important to success. Why disrupt a system, love or not, that provides success? Some successful men, and unsuccessful too, like to possess a wife and children in much the proprietary sense that they own, or manage, a ten-cent sore — or, you cynic, much in the sense of owning and managing a jewelry store. It behooves the successful man to display his success by dropping a lot of finery over her shoulders, by putting rings on her fingers, and by keeping her in a thirty thousand dollar mansion. As long as a man can do this, the world will know that he is a success.

What one sometimes get nowadays with the price of a beer is the knowledge that the relationships which reflect Christ and the Church have come to evil days in some cases.
How does one become a movie critic? In the case of William K. Zinsser it all began when the executive editor of the New York Herald Tribune called him into his office. With the solemnity proper to the occasion the editor handed Mr. Zinsser a pair of thick-lensed glasses and earnestly intoned these fateful words: "Wear them, my boy. And wear them proudly. Today you are a movie critic." And this, Mr. Zinsser tells us, "is how one American boy grew up to achieve one of the great American dreams. I was a movie critic. I blubered my thanks and rushed out ... Suddenly I knew that life would never be the same again. It wasn't."

During the next three and a half years the eminent critical viewed and reviewed more than 600 films. He met world-famed celebrities, attended a world premiere in Venice, and made a memorable tour "through darkest Hollywood." "As a critic," he says, "I reviewed films seriously, and I have serious opinions on the work of the major artists in the field today. Regardless of pressures, I reviewed every film as I saw it. A critic is useful — to his readers and to the art form he is reviewing — only if he has standards."

There are many pressures on the movie critics in our large cities. Since advertising revenues are the lifeblood of a newspaper, it is not always possible to ignore the demands — or the threats — of important clients. Eventually, Mr. Zinsser, too, felt the weight of outside pressure. "When it became too great," he observes, "I began to tire of Movie Land and to yearn for an escape." The escape came in the form of a transfer to the editorial page of the Herald Tribune — a position which the erstwhile critic still holds.

But Mr. Zinsser has not forgotten his experiences in the world of make-believe. He has woven them into an entertaining account titled Seen Any Good Movies Lately? (Doubleday & Company, New York, 1958. $3.95) Captivating illustrations by Robert Day and a preface by Elia Kazan add to the interest and appeal of Mr. Zinsser's book.

Only a few years ago the motion-picture business ranked high among the major industries of the U. S. For some time, however, this industry has been in a decline. But is this, as Mr. Zinsser evidently believes, "the last decline"? Elia Kazan, one of the foremost producers and directors of our day, is more optimistic. In his valuable preface he declares that the motion picture has only begun to realize its potential, and he points to the fact that a vast source of Americana remains virtually untouched. But Mr. Kazan does not underestimate the gravity of the situation in which the motion-picture industry finds itself. This, he declares, is the time for frankness and soul-searching.

Now, as never before, the industry needs "really good critics — capable critics who write with authority and reason, rip the covers off frauds, recognize accomplishments, make standards and preserve them, throw a light on hitherto hidden promise — in short, work creatively in the art of the motion picture."

I know that movie fans will take heart from Mr. Kazan's words. The motion picture has given pleasure to countless thousands all over the world. Audiences everywhere have been thrilled and edified by the great pictures of the past and of the present. Mr. Zinsser lists some of the notable films he reviewed and pays warm tribute to the distinguished directors who have "brought taste and authority to the modern screen."

Christmas week brought three film releases especially designed to appeal to children. By far the best of these is Tom Thumb (M-G-M, George Pal), a delightful adaptation of the beloved fairy tale from the works of the Grimm brothers. The music is bright and melodious, and the trick photography which reduces Russ Tamblyn to the size of the tiny hero is amazingly successful. In addition, fine acting by an excellent cast, as well as Mr. Pal's sensitive direction, merit enthusiastic applause. Children of every age will enjoy Tom Thumb.

Youngsters will get an equal amount of enjoyment from Tonka (Buena Vista, Lewis R. Foster), Walt Disney's engaging contribution to children's entertainment. Once again Mr. Disney has demonstrated his understanding of sure-fire entertainment values and his devotion to high standards in the products that come from his studios.

Unfortunately, The 7th Voyage of Sinbad (Columbia) has little to recommend it to any age group. Filmed in technicolor by a new process called Dynamation, the picture captures the color and the beauty of the Arabian Nights settings with fine success. And here, too, the trick photography is excellent — especially so in the sequences which depict Kathi Grant reduced in size and in the scenes in which a skeleton engages in spirited sword play. But the film remains a not-too-credible excursion into the land of make-believe. It is only fair to add that a large audience of holiday-minded youngsters seemed to enjoy The 7th Voyage of Sinbad. Were they frightened by the appearance of dragons, Cyclopes, two-headed giant rocs, and other monstrous characters? Not at all. They greeted the appearance of each new horror with laughter.
Dear Editor:

The manifestation of the everlasting Gospel Light to the Gentiles as clearly recorded in the Holy Scriptures was most surely the time of great rejoicing among the ancients. We hear these Epiphany bells resound through the heavens in all generations. We know its theme inspires the angels of glory to sing hallelujahs to the mighty hosts of the invisible throngs. Their refrain cannot die away but must be carried by the Spirit to the hearts of men to be reflected and expressed by oratorios, symphonic strains, inspiring anthems and hymns of the ages. In sermons and in Christian classrooms the masses cannot do otherwise than detect that a great Light is come to "all people." In fulfilment of Isaiah 60, the Gentiles have come to this Light and authorities to the brightness of its rising. The glory of the Lord is risen upon us.

In southern North America, God also meant that this Light shine forth in all its brightness. When early Lutheran immigrants came to the South, they experienced serious difficulties in carrying out the great commission, "Teach all nations." Subsidies for this Macedonian mission field were not available. Therefore all bodies of the Synodical Conference were moved to join hands in sending out missionaries to bring the blessed Gospel truth of salvation by redemption in Jesus Christ to the uncounted, seething, restless, and benighted souls of a liberated race. It was never the purpose of these consecrated missionaries, who labored under severe privations, trials, and persecutions, to establish an apartheid body of Christ succumbing to sinful conformity in social order patterns. It was their purpose, prayer, and consecration to "preach the Gospel to all creatures" and to "teach all nations" that precious blood-bought souls be brought to their only Savior.

The Epiphany Light shines today in the South in its same power and in the same purpose. Mission workers realize the implications and the complexities involved in lifting souls from the yoke of bondage and must rely fully upon the mighty power of Christ, the Head, who operates through His united, enlightened, and sanctified body, the Church. The cause of our headaches and heartaches in the South is sin. Identified in the present-day American way of thinking and living we would label the complication of sin as follows: the Old Adam superiority pride expressed in racism, attention unjustly focused on outward physical appearance and pigmentation, economic fear, political jealousies and struggle for recognition, Epicurean stratification following traditional culture patterns, a shallow theology practiced by a predominating denomination, capitalistic exploitation of the under-dog, ethnocentric and legalistic teaching, unbelief in the mission of Christian love, and the venom of an oppressed people. What is God's cleansing and purging power for all this? The Epiphany Light. This is God's regenerating power and means for a new heart. A new creature (Eph. 4:22-24) is God's answer.

It is the Father's will that missionaries labor in this field, Matt. 9:36-38. Where sin is deep-seated in its subtle character the Church does not call a retreat but instead intensifies its labors. Adequate facilities will be provided. By the same method in which the Lord Jesus chose His disciples from humble circumstances and trained them in the geographic area in which He served, we believe that it is His plan to choose many workers from the church He has already engraven in the South. It is evident that in our stepped-up mission program many more trained workers will be needed than can be provided by the North. It is gratifying to know that all schools with adequate facilities in the North are open to applicants without racial discrimination, but it has also been proven through the decades that very few from the Alabama mission field and from adjoining areas take advantage of this opportunity. If there were no Lutheran schools at Selma and at Greensboro, the services of too many of our young people would be lost to our mission field. On the other hand, schools founded in this area by the heterodox would thrive. Who would be accountable? God said to Moses in calling him to deliver His people from bondage, "What is that in thine hand?" Exodus 4:2. When Moses used the apparently insignificant "rod" in the name of the Lord God, He found it had mighty power.

God has entrusted to our beloved church the Gospel in its full truth and in its purity. He has put into our hands the teaching of the solid theology: the universality of the creation, all nations made of "one blood," Acts 17:26; the Scriptural teaching of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; the teaching of the atonement for sin by the Lamb of God; salvation alone by grace in this faith; the firm conviction of the oneness of the body of Christ and that all members have fellowship one with another. We are thankful that the recent Cleveland convention of the Synodical Conference was moved to "enlarge the place of the tent . . . lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes" (Isaiah 54:2) of the school they already founded in the South, Alabama Lutheran Academy and College. Where we had come short in the past and where we had been disappointed in numerical production, it was decided that now it is urgent that we intensify efforts, expand and grow. Thus the Epiphany Light, by the grace of God, shines forth in
all its brightness and power in the South. We rejoice in the Word: “Lift up thine eyes and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.” Isaiah 60:4.

Walter H. Ellwanger
President
Alabama Lutheran Academy-College
Selma, Alabama

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President Ellwanger and the faculty of Alabama Lutheran Academy-College do not need compliments, much less defense, for the excellent and sacrificial work which they have done in the training of young Negro Luthemns, despite almost insurmountable obstacles. Nor could we question the good faith and sincere purposes of the Synodical Conference Mission Board, whose executives we know and respect highly.

The issue which is at stake in the proposal to relocate and enlarge the Alabama Lutheran Academy and College is, from our point of view, the fundamental question of whether the Church ought, at this late date, to be rebuilding an institution which will be in practice — although we grant that this is not the intent of the Mission Board — a “colored” school. It is our belief that the funds needed to rebuild and adequately maintain a respectable school could, if disbursed as grants to individual students for study in non-segregated institutions, accomplish the same purposes which the Mission Board has in mind (and with which we are in full agreement) — without giving warrant to the criticism that Luthemns accept the segregation pattern of the South.

It should be emphasized that the Synodical Conference Mission Board has never proposed to build a segregated school in Selma. But it is equally important to note that a school in Alabama which has, throughout its history, enrolled only Negro students will be, in effect, a Negro school, whatever its charter or catalogue may say. And unless the Synodical Conference is prepared to pour several million dollars into the school, it will necessarily be an inferior school.

This is our side of the story, a story which, we realize, has two sides. Our inability to see the merit in the other side of the story makes it necessary for us to speak the concern which lies upon our own conscience, even though it means disagreeing with men who, if men may be judged by their fruits, deserve a respectful hearing.

The Editors

Letter from
Xanadu, Nebr.

By G. G.

Dear Editor:

Well, Rev. Zeitgeist has a call, so it looks like we are going to have to fix up the parsonage. We've been intending to fix the place up for several years now but there just hasn't been any money in the budget for it. Where the money will come from now I don't know but we'll have to find it somewhere or sure as shooting Zeitgeist will take the call and then we'll have to go looking for another preacher. And that's something I don't want to have to go through again.

I was on the committee the last time we called and people still blame me for getting Zeitgeist here. The man they really wanted was a professor at the seminary who had preached at our Mission Festival a couple of years before and to get him they were willing to go as high as $3200 on the salary with a $100 car allowance. When I told them that that was out of the picture they called this young guy from Milwaukee who told us we would have to put a new roof on the parsonage if he came, which made everybody mad. Then we called a couple of other men and finally Zeitgeist.

I don’t know what everybody has against Zeitgeist. Granted he’s no fireball of a preacher, he’s still as good as most of them and at least he keeps his sermons short. I don’t go for some of his Catholic notions like having real candles on the altar and singing all that stuff before the sermon but everybody’s doing it nowadays and if you don’t keep harping on it you get to the point where you can go through the whole rigmarole without even thinking about it. Like I keep telling people here, when you go out to a restaurant you don’t have to eat everything they put on your plate and when you go to church you don’t have to like everything in the service. As long as there is something in the sermon to get your teeth into you can skip the side-dishes.

So I'm ready to stick with Zeitgeist. At least we know what we've got in him and you can never tell about the next man. It would be just our luck to get one of these nervous types that are always stirring things up and harping on stewardship. I've got enough people yelling at me at home and in the store without having the preacher yell at me on Sundays.

Regards,
G.G.
OBEDIENCE

This was our last gathering of the year under the Christmas tree. . . . A few friends had come through the snow to talk quietly about many things . . . about friends now far away or long gone . . . about Christmas in Russia . . . about the greatest event of 1958 — the astonishing and dismaying opening of the remainder of the Universe for us on this planet and what God might have in mind with this sudden lifting of our horizons . . . this widening of our dimensions. . . . Like all good conversations this one proceeded like a meandering brook. . . . There were no final conclusions, no committee reports, no resounding resolutions. . . . We just talked, and the words were quiet and small, like still water behind a momentary rock in the stream of our lives. . . .

In the course of our wanderings we came to a discussion of a new book about Martin Luther. . . . We agreed that it was only a dim reflection of the balance and the contradictions in the Augustinian monk who upset the world. . . . Inevitably someone asked the question: “What do you think Martin Luther would say about the world which he helped to create?” . . . There was the usual talk about the depth and extent of his influence until the oldest among us said quietly from his corner by the fireplace: “Martin Luther would be most astonished at the disappearance of the virtue of obedience in much of Christendom. . . . To be sure, we are still obedient in some things, but they are usually the wrong things or they are the obedience of a difficult decision rather than a God-given desire of body and spirit. . . . He would not like that — because he was a very obedient man.”

Long after my friends had gone and only the lights on the tree brought an understanding glow to the room, the words rang in my mind. . . . Obedience. . . . Was this perhaps one of the dark sorrows of the world and the church? . . . We no longer know how to be truly obedient. . . . I suspect that it is a very unpopular word in our neurotic, self-centered, disobedient age. . . . It does not rest easily in our chatter about democracy. . . . We know all about freedom, rights and privileges — but how long has it been since anyone said anything good and right about obedience — the sure mirror of humility and lowliness of heart? . . .

Obedience to what? . . . Since the word is the tolling of a forgotten bell, we must start slowly. . . . There are too many other sounds about. . . . Certainly most of us would agree that it means obedience to all that is good, holy, just, honorable and right. . . . It is obedience to the men and women who through the winnowing years have learned wisdom and faith and goodness. . . . It is obedience to our daily tasks, to the duties which lie close and challenging at hand. . . . Perhaps there would be a few who would also agree that this is really greatness . . . who would remember Wordsworth’s fine sonnet on Milton:

“Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart —
So didst thou travel in life’s common way,
In cheerful godliness; And yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.”

There it is — and it is clearly two things. . . . It is obedience to the heavenly vision of godliness and obedience to the lowest duties — but it is always obedience. . . . Here is the great, single, forgotten virtue in the modern world. . . .

It is evident, of course, that the entire concept must be raised into the realm of religion. . . . It is only under the shadow of the Cross that we begin to reach the ultimate obedience. . . . Emil Brunner has written: “Faith is obedience; nothing else; literally nothing else at all.” . . . Have we ever noticed how this rings through the prophets, evangelists and apostles? . . . There seems to be a recurring and tolling emphasis on the two words: “Listen” and “Obey.” . . . This is required of us — to listen and to obey. . . . Anything else? . . . Nothing only to listen carefully for the voice of God in our own lives and then act in accordance with what we hear. . . . Out of this listening obedience there will come, as surely as it has come these many waiting years, the joy of freedom in God and the joy of obedience to God.

When all is said and done, this is probably no more and no less than saying: “Yes” to God. . . . Always there will remain some mystery and obscurity about His will. . . . Earth is still a life-time of darkness. . . . Light and vision do not come until heaven, even for the saints. . . . Nor is this necessarily a blind obedience. . . . It is the obedience of the saint who has come to understand the will of God thoroughly and completely. . . . The saint is never a person who grits his teeth to obey laws which he does not understand or that go against his grain. . . . Obedience is a response from the deepest, inner core of his being, reduced and sanctified by the power of the living God.